

from Journal of the First Voyage to America by Christopher Columbus

Reading Strategy: Recognize Author's Purpose

Recognizing an author's purpose for writing can help you understand why certain words, details, and events are included in a piece of writing. Columbus kept a journal for the purpose of persuading Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand to give him more financial backing for his explorations. As a result, his language puts his explorations in the best possible light. For example, he talks about the beauty of the island:

This island even exceeds the others in beauty and fertility. Groves of lofty and flourishing trees are abundant, as also large lakes, surrounded and overhung by the foliage, in a most enchanting manner. . . . The melody of the birds was so exquisite that no one was ever willing to part from the spot, and the flocks of parrots obscured the heavens.

DIRECTIONS: As you read, use the following chart to record Columbus's favorable descriptions and events. Then, explain his purpose for describing them in that way.

Descriptions	Columbus's Purpose